

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01 /142 W

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FM USINT DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 071

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION NATO

USINT CAIRO

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USUN NEWYORK 006

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0069

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, XT, XF

SUBJECT: JOBERT'S VIEWS ON SYRIA

REF: PARIS 3885

1. I READ WITH INTEREST THE COMMENT OF QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR
ROUILLON PURPORTING TO GIVE FONMIN JOBERT'S IMPRESSIONS ON HIS
TRIP TO SYRIA. WHILE I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT PRESIDENT
ASAD MAY HAVE TOLD JOBERT I THINK THE LATTER'S IMPRESSIONS
ARE ERRONEOUS THAT THERE IS "NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
PRESIDENT ASAD AND OTHER SYRIAN OFFICIALS OVER THE TOUGH LINE
SYRIA HAS MAINTAINED ON THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS." BASED
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ON REPORTS I HAVE PICKED UP HERE IT WOULD APPEAR THAT ASAD

IS PREPARED TO GO TO GENEVA ONCE HE RECEIVES THE NECESSARY ASSURANCES THAT DISENGAGEMENT ON THE GOLAN IS ONLY A FIRST STEP TOWARD EVENTUAL OVER ALL SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM. THERE IS, OF COURSE, STRONG OPPOSITION TO ASAD FROM WITHIN THE REGIME WITH FONMIN KHADDAM'S NAME BEING MOST COMMONLY CITED AS THE SPOKESMAN OF THE OPPOSITION. MAYBE JOBERT SPENT TOO MUCH TIME WITH KHADDAM.

2. IN ANY EVENT DESPITE FRENCH PRETENTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA BASED ON THEIR "LONG AND TRADITIONAL TIES," I DON'T THINK THAT THEY OR ANY OTHER EMBASSY HERE ARE IN A POSITION TO ASSESS ACCURATELY THE THINKING OF THE INNER CIRCLES OF THE SYRIAN ESTABLISHMENT. NONETHELESS, ALL THE SIGNS I AM GETTING POINT TO FLEXIBILITY AND PRAGMATISM ON THE PART OF ASAD MINGLED WITH CAUTION AND PATIENCE.
SCOTES

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